

On behalf of WCAL, the public radio service of St. Olaf College, I am writing to encourage the adoption of HD radio's proposed supplemental audio service (SAC). WCAL was licensed to St. Olaf in 1922; in its 80+ year history, the station has evolved from an experimental code-only operation to a shared-time AM broadcast station and, beginning in 1967, an FM broadcaster.

WCAL is a vital independent service to the region. It provides a full-time classical music and arts service to the 2.5+ million people living in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. WCAL is a founding member station of National Public Radio but, contrary to some confusion, is not owned or operated by or in any way affiliated with the regional service of Minnesota Public Radio - WCAL is a stand-alone public radio station; its commitment is focused on serving the local community, 24 hours daily.

WCAL originates 14 hours of locally-produced programming every weekday, and is the Twin Cities' exclusive source for NPR's Performance Today, Sunday Baroque, and other nationally-broadcast classical music and cultural programs. It also produces a weekly national program series on choral music, and national broadcasts of the St. Olaf Christmas Festival. Additionally, WCAL is a successful producer of nationally-broadcast current affairs specials on issues related to international peace and the well-being of children and families, and is a regular contributor of music performances to NPR's programs. Over the past ten years, WCAL producers have earned the station over 20 regional and national awards, most recently (2003) for its coverage of the local arts community.

WCAL is in the process of converting to HDFS. The station is particularly pleased to be in a position to support and explore better ways of serving its audiences with CD-quality digital sound, program associated data (PAD), and the potential supplemental audio channel (SAC). Not only can this provide supplemental service as an extension of our own existing programming, it also provides an exciting opportunity to explore new program delivery possibilities with others at St. Olaf College, neighboring Carleton College and our 13 member-station colleagues in AMPERS (Association of Minnesota Public Education Radio Stations - the non Minnesota Public Radio stations). These "community" stations - unlikely candidates for HDFS in the immediate future - and their relationships with diverse urban and rural Minnesota populations, provide fertile ground for creating and extending programming to new audiences via WCAL.

I urge the FCC to adopt a SAC standard for HD radio. Thank you for your consideration.

John Gaddo, General Manager, WCAL-FM
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